

Price River Bridge
Spanning the Price River
760 North Street
in Carbonville, one mile
northwest of Price,
Carbon County
Utah

HAER No. UT-91

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
PRICE RIVER BRIDGE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: Spanning the Price River at 760 North Street in Carbonville, one mile northwest of Price, Carbon County, Utah

Quad: Price, Utah 7.5 min scale

UTM: 12/514470mE 4384430mN

Date of Construction: 1918

Present Owner: Carbon County
County Seat, Price, Utah

Present Use: Vehicular and pedestrian bridge to be replaced by a new vehicular and pedestrian bridge. Projected date of removal is Fall/Winter 1997/1998.

Significance: The Price River Bridge is a single span Pratt half-hip pony truss bridge that rests on a concrete substructure.

Historian: Jenni Prince-Mahoney and Lorna Billat, JBR Environmental Consultants, Inc., September 1997.

II. HISTORY

A. NEED FOR THE BRIDGE

The town of Carbonville is located on the south end of Price Canyon where it opens up into Price River Valley. It is on the northwest periphery of the town of Price in Carbon County, Utah. The Book Cliffs are to the north. Carbonville is about four miles south of the town of Helper. The town is stretched out along the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad line and Highway 6. The Price River runs through the canyon and then as it emerges, it is west of Carbonville.

Mormons settled along the Price River in the late 1870s with farming and ranching the main economic activities. Transportation of freight, such as crops and animals, became important and a freight road was constructed through Nine Mile Canyon. The turnoff to Nine Mile Canyon is approximately 10 miles to the southeast, just east of Wellington. It has been stated that most farmers and early settlers were also freighters, "...any farmer who had either two, four, or six good horses and a couple wagons would be ready at most any time to make a trip on the freight road."¹ Further transportation developments occurred in the 1880s when the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad sought a route from Denver to Salt Lake City,

discovering and utilizing the coal deposits in the area.² Transportation was crucial to the continued economic stability and growth of the area. Carbon County was created in 1894, named for the vast amounts of coal. It was previously a portion of Emery County³ which was established in 1880.

The town of Carbonville, which remains unincorporated, was established in approximately 1879, originally as a Mormon settlement. Economically the area was primarily a farming community, however, it did have some support from the coal mining industry which also started in the late 1800s.⁴ The Price River is described as the "lifeblood of the [Price River] Valley".⁵ During the early settlement of the Price and Carbonville areas, water had to be carried from the river in barrels and tanks. "An irrigation ditch to carry water to the fields was of utmost importance".⁶ Two ditches were under construction in February of 1879, however, it wasn't until the Price Canal was finished in 1888 that the irrigation problem was solved.⁷ The Price Canal flows through the east side of Carbonville to points southward. The Carbon Canal, constructed in 1909, carried water from a dam on the Price River approximately four miles north of Price, through the valley west of Carbonville and Price to areas southward about 30 miles.⁸ The bridge in

Carbonville was most likely utilized to access farms on the west side, and the railroad tracks that were on the east side of town.

B. CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

The history of the Price River Bridge in Carbonville is primarily unknown, although there is suspicion that it was originally the Sunnyside Bridge built in 1917 or 1918 and moved to this location at a later date.⁹ The following excerpt from the Carbon County Minutes of the Commissioners Meeting held on May 7th, 1918 is a possible reference to the purchase of the bridge. It states " The matter of the Sunnyside Bridge expense, the commissioners recommended that the state road refund to Sunnyside town the sum of \$1200.00."¹⁰ The Sunnyside Bridge was possibly built by James J. Burke, a noted bridge architect from Salt Lake City.¹¹ Burke was active in Carbon County in the 1910s.

C. LOCATION

The Price River Bridge is located on 760 North Street in Carbonville, just north of Price, Utah. It is in the NW¼ NE¼ SW¼ NW¼ Section 17, T14S R10E (Figure 1).

D. HISTORIC THEME CONTEXT

Over the years, the original deck has been replaced, a makeshift wood shelf has been constructed on the west side, and PVC pipes attached to both sides. The PVC pipe on the north side of the bridge is approximately 10 cm in diameter and light blue in color. It is partially covered by a metal sleeve that exhibits some deterioration, exposing the pipe. The metal I-beams that comprise the sides of the bridge have not been maintained in recent years and have rusted and been vandalized with graffiti.

Regardless, the original integrity and characteristics of the bridge have not been impacted by the modifications and alterations. The bridge retains most aspects of integrity including design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and possibly association. It falls within the historic theme of Transportation and possibly Agriculture. The bridges' association with agriculture is suggested by its location and access to the outlying areas. The bridge function has changed over the years in that it used to be a primary means of conveyance for citizens of Carbonville across the river to homes and property on the west side. However, since the construction of the freeway (Hwy 6) there are less homes on the west side and a major decrease in traffic. It meets criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) because it represents

early 20th century bridge technology. It is therefore recommended eligible for the NRHP. The bridge is scheduled for removal and replacement by a new bridge.

III. THE BRIDGE

A. DESCRIPTION

The bridge is identified as structure #007011C within UDOT's Bridge Inventory. It is located on the south end of Carbonville, on the northwest periphery of Price, and spans the Price River. The bridge is a single span Pratt half-hip pony truss structure,¹² possibly built in 1918. It rests on a concrete substructure, with a corrugated steel deck originally covered with earth. The span is 50 ft and allows only single-lane traffic with a 14.2 ft curb to curb deck width. The superstructure consists of three I-beams, each approximately 16 ft long, stretching the width of the bridge with seven smaller I-beams stretching the span of the bridge. The large I-beams are placed about 10 feet apart. Between these are 1 inch diameter steel rods connected to the large I-beams and abutments in a cross support design. On top of this corrugated steel has been placed to comprise the deck. The deck has been replaced several times and presently consists of corrugated steel covered with asphalt. The abutments and wingwalls are made of concrete. The truss portion of the

bridge is constructed of steel I-beams and supports in the Pratt half-hip configuration. Additional metal rail has been added inside the truss for pedestrian traffic safety. Attached to each side of the bridge is a PVC pipe, some of which is encased in a metal sleeve. On the west side of the bridge a makeshift wood support shelf has been constructed for the PVC pipe. The bridge is in a state of decay. According to the Structural Inventory and Appraisal Sheet the bridge was constructed around 1918.¹³

B. MODIFICATIONS

The deck has been replaced several times and presently consists of corrugated steel covered with asphalt. Additional metal rail has been added on the interior of the truss for pedestrian traffic safety. A makeshift wood shelf has been constructed on the west side and PVC pipes are attached to both sides of the bridge. The PVC pipe on the north side of the bridge is approximately 10 cm in diameter and light blue in color. It is partially covered by a metal sleeve that exhibits some deterioration, exposing the pipe. Dates of additions and/or modifications are unknown.

C. OWNERSHIP AND FUTURE

The Price River Bridge in Carbonville is owned and maintained by the County of Carbon. The bridge is being replaced because it is functionally inadequate for current, modern traffic loads. It is a single lane bridge on a 2-way street, is posted for load, and has substandard parapets.

IV. FOOTNOTES

1. Reynolds, Thursey Jessen, Centennial Echoes from Carbon County, p. 45.
2. Notarianni, Philip F., "Carbon County" in Utah History Encyclopedia, p. 75.
3. Ibid. p. 75.
4. Ronald G. Watt, Personal Communication, 1997.
5. Watt, Ronald G., A History of Carbon County, p. 11.
6. Johnson, Jane Lyman, "Price" in Utah History Encyclopedia, p. 444.
7. Ibid. p. 444.
8. Watt, Ronald G., A History of Carbon County, p. 78.
9. FraserDesign, Utah Historic Bridge Inventory Structure #007011C.
10. Carbon County Commission Minutes, May 7th, 1918.
11. FraserDesign, Utah Historic Bridge Inventory Structure #007011C.
12. Comp, T. Allan and Donald Jackson, Bridge Truss Types.
13. Utah Department of Transportation, Structure #007011C, UDOT Structural Inventory and Appraisal Form.

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Johnson, Jane Lyman, "Price" in Utah History Encyclopedia, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1994.

Notarianni, Philip F., "Carbon County" in Utah History Encyclopedia, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1994.

Reynolds, Thursey Jessen (compiler), Centennial Echoes from Carbon County, Carbon County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1948.

Van Cott, John W., Utah Place Names, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1990.

Watt, Ronald G., A History of Carbon County, Salt Lake City, Utah State Historical Society, Carbon County Commission, 1997.

B. PERIODICALS

Comp, T. Allan and Donald Jackson, Bridge Truss Types: A Guide to Dating and Identifying, in American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 95, History News, Vol. 32 No. 5, May, 1977.

C. OTHER

Ronald G. Watt, Personal Communication, LDS Church Archivist, 1997.

FraserDesign

n.d. Utah Historic Bridge Inventory. Unpublished manuscript on file at the Utah Department of Transportation Office, Salt Lake City.

Utah Department of Transportation
1994 Structural Inventory and Appraisal Sheet
Bridge Inspection Report

Carbon County Minutes of Commissioners Meeting
May 17, 1918, Carbon County Offices, Price, Utah



